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## **GLICKMAN ANNOUNCES \$200 MILLION FOR 1998 ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVES PROGRAM**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26, 1998--Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman today announced state funding allocations for \$200 million for 1998 under USDA's Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

"The EQIP program proved itself a winner from the start," said Glickman. "In less than a year it has become one of the most popular conservation programs at USDA, not to mention its long term environmental benefits.

"There is a strong demand for voluntary conservation efforts, and EQIP helps farmers and ranchers meet that demand with financial, technical, and educational assistance, as well as incentives," Glickman said.

Under EQIP, USDA can provide cost-share assistance to family-sized farms and ranches for up to 75 percent of the costs of certain environmental protection practices, such as grassed waterways, filter strips, manure management facilities, capping abandoned wells, and wildlife habitat enhancement.

USDA also may provide incentive payments to encourage producers to apply such land management practices as nutrient, manure, irrigation water, wildlife, and integrated pest management.

EQIP was authorized by the 1996 Farm Bill to address agriculture's priority natural resource and environmental problems. It reflects the commitment of USDA and the Congress for a flexible, effective, voluntary conservation program for agricultural land.

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One emphasis in EQIP is the leveraging of EQIP funds with other conservation efforts to foster even greater stewardship of natural resources. This has happened around the country. Examples include:

--Among the efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay, the Deer Creek EQIP priority area in Harford County, Maryland, is helping farmers address animal waste, the top concern in that area. In addition to EQIP funds, the Maryland Department of Agriculture provides cost-share funds and the combined funding has made it possible for dairy farmers, for example, to upgrade animal waste storage facilities that were prohibitively expensive before. In 1998, EQIP will also be used to assist with the Maryland programs to address toxic *Pfiesteria* in the Chesapeake Bay drainage areas.

--In North Carolina, more than \$700,000 of EQIP funds will be joined this year with more than \$800,000 of state cost-share funds to reduce nitrogen in the Neuse River basin by 30 percent. Massive fish kills and the discovery of *Pfiesteria* in the Neuse have brought this river national attention. Sources of nitrogen in the basin include swine and poultry operations, municipal sewage, and agricultural runoff. NRCS, the Cooperative Extension Service, and the North Carolina Division of Soil and Water Conservation have formed a partnership to help landowners in the basin design and install best management practices. Common practices that will be used include nutrient management plans, riparian buffers, filter strips, conservation tillage, crop rotations, stripcropping, and animal waste treatment facilities.

--In Wisconsin, the Oneida Tribe and two county land conservation departments have formed a partnership to reduce nonpoint source pollution in the Duck and Ashwaubenon Creek watersheds in cooperation with local, tribal, state, and federal agencies. In addition to the 1998 EQIP proposal for vegetative buffers, wetland restoration, nutrient and pest management, and improved tillage, the state is projecting its funding at \$10-\$15 million over a 10-year period in this priority area.

In 1997, the first year of the EQIP program, USDA approved 23,000 long-term contracts with farmers and ranchers. Nearly 58,000 applications for assistance were received, with requests totaling more than three times the amount of available funding.

EQIP assistance is provided primarily to state priority areas. Each state's priority areas were determined locally and then approved by the NRCS state conservationist, in conjunction with state technical committees and USDA Farm Service Agency personnel. Under EQIP, priority areas are watersheds, or geographic regions, with (1) special environmental sensitivity, such as important wetland areas, or (2) significant natural resource concerns, such as manure management, soil erosion control, and water quality.

For 1998, producers will be able to sign EQIP contracts once state priority areas are selected for funding. In the meantime, producers may contact local USDA Service Centers and NRCS, which administers the program, for information on possible eligibility for EQIP. Producers also can work with NRCS to develop their own conservation plans which are required for any EQIP contract.

State funding for EQIP program assistance announced by the Secretary is as follows:

Environmental Quality Incentives Program  
Fiscal Year 1998 Funds Distribution

State	Amount
Alabama	\$ 3,200,000
Alaska	432,000
Arizona	5,069,000
Arkansas	6,490,000
California	7,558,000
Colorado	6,386,000
Connecticut	614,000
Delaware	1,113,000
Florida	4,774,000
Georgia	4,267,000
Hawaii	1,051,000
Idaho	4,143,000
Illinois	4,198,000
Indiana	3,180,000
Iowa	5,490,000
Kansas	5,188,000
Kentucky	2,891,000
Louisiana	5,311,000
Maine	2,545,000
Maryland	2,249,000
Massachusetts	860,000
Michigan	4,157,000
Minnesota	5,569,000
Mississippi	5,391,000
Missouri	4,975,000
Montana	6,264,000
Nebraska	5,023,000
Nevada	1,507,000
New Hampshire	372,000
New Jersey	1,070,000
New Mexico	3,865,000
New York	4,560,000
North Carolina	5,720,000
North Dakota	4,479,000
Ohio	3,284,000
Oklahoma	5,391,000
Oregon	4,219,000

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Pacific Basin	516,000
Pennsylvania	4,180,000
Puerto Rico & Virgin Islands	1,159,000
Rhode Island	245,000
South Carolina	2,080,000
South Dakota	4,348,000
Tennessee	3,056,000
Texas	16,335,000
Utah	3,838,000
Vermont	1,218,000
Virginia	2,631,000
Washington	4,999,000
West Virginia	1,809,000
Wisconsin	4,356,000
Wyoming	3,875,000
Subtotal Distributed	197,500,000
Not Yet Distributed	2,500,000
EQIP U.S. Total	200,000,000